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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement a comprehensive job training model that will increase the self-determination and integrated community employment of youth and young adults with serious mental illness or emotional disturbance. Project objectives are to (1) promote interagency collaboration and coordination; (2) increase competitive employment opportunities for youth by providing comprehensive services based on individual needs; (3) provide peer support from peer mentors; (4) strengthen school and community capacity by increasing awareness and knowledge of the needs of this population and the use of natural supports; and (5) evaluate the model and provide information useful for replication. By the end of year one, 88 individuals had been referred to the program. Of those, 51 completed the intake process and became participants in the project. Three-fourths of the participants were involved in some type of work experience. The project's status as of September 30, 1996 is discussed. Each objective is examined and efforts to implement it are presented. Also discussed is how information about the project's progress will be disseminated. Two case studies and five tables are included. (MKA)

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ED 423 452

Coordinated Employment Opportunities (CEO) for Youth and Young Adults with Serious Emotional Disturbance or Mental Illness (PR #H235S50010)

Annual Report: Year 1

Prepared by:
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September 30, 1996

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Coordinated Employment Opportunities (CEO) Project for Youth and Young Adults with Serious Emotional Disturbance or Mental Illness Annual Report: Year 1

I. Project Summary

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement a comprehensive job training model that will increase the self-determination and integrated community employment of youth and young adults with serious mental illness (SMI) or serious emotional disturbance (SED). This project represents a collaborative effort among the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), the Enterprise Community of Bridgeport, the Connecticut Department of Social Services Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), the State Department of Education (SDE), and consumers.

This model is designed to serve the transition needs of all youth and young adults with SED/SMI including: 1) in-school youth ages 17 to 21 who are in their last two years of high school; and, 2) out-of school young adults ages 17 to 26. A control group evaluation design will determine employment differences between the participant group and a control group who do not receive demonstration services. Project objectives are: to 1) Promote interagency collaboration and coordination; 2) Increase competitive employment opportunities of youth by providing comprehensive services based on individual needs; 3) Provide peer support from peer mentors; 4) Strengthen school and community capacity by increasing awareness and knowledge of the needs of this population and the use of natural supports; and, 5) Evaluate the model and provide information useful for replication.

This three-year project is preparing and placing youth and young adults with SED or SMI into competitive employment by providing individualized job training and intensive support services to meet the needs of each individual. Project services include person-centered planning, service coordination, referral, self-advocacy training, job seeking skills, job keeping skills, situational assessment, job placement, transitional and regular employment, structured on-the-job training, individualized counseling and follow-along support. The project also provides 24-hour crisis intervention, an emphasis on personal choice and the involvement of consumers as full partners in all aspects of their program development.

Project staff include the Project Director, Project Coordinator, two Employment Coordinators and two Job Coaches. One Employment Coordinator and Job Coach team provides services in the Enterprise Community of Bridgeport including students from Bridgeport Public Schools. The other Employment Coordinator and Job Coach team provides services in the Greater Hartford area including students from East Hartford Public Schools, New Britain Public Schools and students from Polaris, a CREC special education program located in East Hartford and serving students from various school districts in the Greater Hartford area.

In line with the project's effort to promote interagency collaboration, an Advisory Council was formed to monitor project activities. Twenty-three members represent various agencies in the greater Hartford and Bridgeport areas. Teams in each of the three school districts/communities, Bridgeport, East Hartford/Hartford, and New Britain, were also formed to provide planning, service and coordination.

Although the project began October 1, 1995, the first three months were spent primarily on hiring project staff, establishing relationships with schools and relevant agencies, and informing potential referral sources about the project. In December, a few referrals became participants and this number increased in January. By the end of Year 1, 88 individuals were referred to the project. Of those, 51 (58%) completed the intake process and became active participants in the project. Approximately half of the participants are in-school youth and half have finished school. There are more males (57%) than female (43%) and 60% of the participants are from minority groups. The mean age is 19.7 years and the average time in the project is 6.3 months.

Three-fourths (76%) of the participants, who were in the project five months or more (n=28 out of 37), participated in some type of work experience. A total of 15 participated in situational assessments and a total of 21 obtained competitive employment. Some participated in a situational assessment only (7), some had both a situational assessment and competitive employment (8), and others went directly to competitive employment (13). Three participants have achieved the BRS closure criterion of 60 days continuous employment. Two others have met this criterion but have not been closed by BRS because additional services are being planned or developed. Currently 11 participants are still employed. Case studies of two participants, describing their experiences in the project, are presented in Appendix A. These individuals will be followed throughout the duration of the project.

As part of on-going efforts to provide support to participants, a two-day training on networking was held for participants in Bridgeport, with one planned for Hartford and New Britain in October. In addition, peer support groups are being formed with the first already underway in New Britain. A two-day training was held in May for professionals from BRS, mental health agencies, schools and other agencies. Follow-up sessions are planned for October. Seven parent workshops were held throughout the state. Additional ones are planned, including some specifically targeted to reach parents from minority groups in New Britain and Bridgeport.

Finally, a control group has been identified for comparison with project participants as a part of the project evaluation. Preliminary information has been gathered on the participants and the control group as of September 30, 1996. Data analysis will begin in November.

II. Project Status as of September 30, 1996

Objective 1: Promote interagency collaboration and coordination to ensure effective employment outcomes for youth and young adults with SMI or SED.

1.1 Create an Interagency Advisory Council with appropriate subcommittees to monitor and support project activities; include representatives from relevant state agencies, LEAs, job training providers, mental health and other service providers, employers, and consumers.

The CEO Advisory Council currently includes 23 members and six project staff. Members include representatives from relevant state agencies (Bureau of Rehabilitative Services, State Department of Education, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Labor), four LEAs (Bridgeport, East Hartford, New Britain and CREC), four mental health providers (Bridgeport, Hartford, East Hartford and New Britain), and other agencies.

Meetings were held September 30 and November 28 in 1995, February 14, April 23, June 20, and September 25, 1996. A subcommittee for Collaboration and Training Activities met four times and planned training for professionals, parents and participants (See Objective 4).

1.2 Create collaborative systems built around the needs of the consumers and their community resources. Increase communication between schools and agencies. Improve service delivery by working with agencies to implement "best practices" recommended by BRS study.

The Interagency Advisory Council includes representatives from a number of agencies and service providers. One of its goals is to increase communication and effective service delivery. Collaboration with BRS and DMHAS is substantial, including staff training and cooperation with project activities.

The Project Coordinator is a member of the Statewide Transition Task Force which includes many other state agencies such as the Bureau of Adult Education and Bureau of Education Services for the Blind (BESB). She is also serving as co-chair of the Subcommittee on Employer Awareness.

Technical assistance sessions to improve service delivery and implement "best practices" were held on May 28-29, 1996. Trainers for the two-day workshop were Martine Gold and Joe Marrone from the Institute for Community Inclusion, Boston and Dennis McCrory and Tom McCarthy from the New England Psychiatric Rehabilitation Training Program, Boston. The goal of the training was to begin to create a rehabilitation community of interest among school personnel, vocational rehabilitation and mental health staff. A total of 37 professionals participated in all or part of the two-day workshop.

The final activity of the workshop involved a breakout session. Three community teams, Bridgeport, East Hartford and New Britain each identified a goal that they, as a team, want to address. Ideas on how to implement the goal were discussed. Follow-up technical assistance sessions will be held on October 27, 28 and 29, 1996 (one for each community). The purpose of these sessions will be to complete an action plan relative to the goal identified at the May training [see 1.3]. The goals identified were:

Linkages with Business and Civic Organizations - New Britain
Job Placement - East Hartford
Clients and Jobs Matched Quickly - Bridgeport

1.3 Create two Interagency Community Assistance Teams to provide planning, service coordination, and shared funding for individuals with SMI or SED who present unique and extensive needs.

At the end of the two-day Community Rehabilitation Network Training in May, teams were identified from each of the three communities: Bridgeport, East Hartford/Hartford, and New Britain. The teams will meet again at the end of October. [See 1.2] It is the expectation that these teams will become the Interagency Community Assistance Teams and will be called together to provide service coordination as needed.

Objective 2: Increase opportunities for employment of youth and young adults with SMI or SED by providing comprehensive services based on individual needs in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner.

2.1 Each project year, a minimum of 80 persons with SED or SMI will participate in screening and intake to determine eligibility for the project. The first 50 who meet the screening criteria will be selected as participants and provided with appropriate assessment to determine individual strengths, skills, and interests.

As of September 30, 88 individuals have been referred to the project, mostly by BRS counselors and/or school personnel [See Table 1]. Of these, 51 became active participants.Some referred to the project were not met because they could not be found; some were not available (i.e. in jail, moved out of the area), or they did not meet project criteria with regard to disability, age, or geographic location. Referrals accepted in Bridgeport had to reside in the Enterprise Community of Bridgeport and not in near-by towns, whereas referrals were accepted throughout the Greater Hartford area which covers a wide area and many towns (i.e New Britain, East Hartford). In the Greater Hartford area, some referred to the project were not screened because the maximum number in that area for Year 1 (25) had been reached. After some participants in the Hartford area left the project, others were then screened and became participants. Also recent referrals have not yet been screened.

Table 1
A Breakdown of Individuals Referred as of September 30, 1996

	Greater Hartford Area		Enterprise Community of Bridgeport		Total	
Active Participants	32	65.3%	19	48.7%	51	58.0%
Referred - Not Participating	12	24.5%	11	28.2%	23	26.1%
Referred - Not Yet Screened	5	10.2%	9	23.1%	14	15.9%
Total Referred	49	55.7%	39	44.3%	88	100.0%

Of the 51 participants, approximately half are in school and half are out of school. The mean age is 19.7 years and the average time in the project is 6.3 months. There are more males (56.9%) than females (43.1%). The ethnic breakdown is about 60% minority to 40% non minority in the overall group. This does vary within the two areas; the Greater Hartford area has a much larger percentage of white participants (56%) and Bridgeport has a much larger percentage of minority participants (84%). [See Table 2]

2.2 Annually 50 participants will be involved in person-centered planning and will develop individual support plans for employment based on personal choice. Their Employment Coordinator will provide service coordination and referral to comprehensive services, as needed, to obtain and maintain employment.

As of September 30, 1996, 51 participants have completed the intake process. Individual support plans are being developed as part of the IWRP process with collaboration by the consumer, the BRS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the CEO Employment Coordinator. Support plans have also been developed as part of the IEP planning process.

Service coordination and referral to comprehensive services are being provided including: various types of counseling, medical services, housing, self-advocacy, social skills training, job seeking skills, stress management, vocational services and job training. Services are being provided in a culturally sensitive manner. Two staff members are from minority backgrounds and provide insights to other CEO staff regarding Hispanic and African American culture. One staff member played a leadership role in a weekend workshop on cultural diversity and took two CEO participants to the workshop. She shared experiences about this event with project staff. One of the CEO participants volunteered to serve on next year's planning committee.

Table 2
Demographic Description of Active Participants

School Status	Hartford		Enterprise Community of Bridgeport		Total	
In School	15	46.9%	11	57.9%	26	51.0%
Out-of-School	17	53.1%	8	42.1%	25	49.0%
Total	32	62.7%	19	37.3%	51	100.0%
Mean Age	19.9 years		19.3 years		19.7 years	
Gender						
Females	13	40.6%	9	47.4%	22	43.1%
Males	19	59.4%	10	52.6%	29	56.9%
Ethnicity						
Asian	1	3.1%	1	5.3%	2	3.9%
Black	3	9.4%	10	52.6%	13	25.5%
Hispanic	10	31.3%	5	26.3%	15	29.4%
White	18	56.2%	3	15.8%	21	41.2%
Avg. Months in Project	6.7 months		5.6 months		6.3 months	

2.3 Annually 50 participants will receive intensive individual counseling and follow-along support from their Employment Coordinator.

In Year 1, 51 participants have received counseling and support from project staff as needed, including 24 hour beeper services, transitional, vocational, psychological, educational and family counseling; trouble shooting and crisis intervention at job sites and non-work situations.

A summary of the status of all 51 active participants is outlined in Table 3. Nine participants were closed by BRS for various reasons [see 2.7] and will not receive project services unless they request them in the future. Eleven are either in the process of determining eligibility or in planning. Two are in training (i.e., situational assessments). Staff is actively developing jobs for 12 participants. Thirteen are employed or successfully closed by BRS with 60 days of continuous employment [see 2.5 and 2.6].

Table 3
Summary of Status of All CEO Active Participants as of September 30, 1996

Status	Hartford (N=32)		Enterprise Community of Bridgeport (N=19)		Total (N=51)	
BRS Closure [a]	9	28.0%	0	0.0%	9	17.6%
On Hold	3	9.4%	1	5.3%	4	7.9%
Eligibility/Planning	5	15.6%	6	31.6%[1]	11	21.6%
Training/Situational Assessments[b]	2	6.3%	0	0.0%	2	3.9%
Development	6	18.8%	6	31.6%	12	23.5%
Employment	5	15.6%[2]	5	26.2%	10	19.6%
Successful BRS Closure	2	6.3%	1	5.3%	3	5.9%
Total	32	100.0%	19	100.0%	51	100.0%

[a]BRS = Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
[b]Training includes but is not limited to Situational Assessments

2.4 Annually 50 participants will be placed in carefully selected, well-matched competitive paid positions and provided with on-the-job training as needed. Based on individual needs, a continuum of job training options will be available leading to competitive employment including vocational training, community-based work exploration, situational assessment and transitional employment.

Three-fourths (75.7%) of the participants, who were in the project five months or more (28 out of 37), participated in some type of work experience this year, either competitive employment and/or a situational assessment [See Table 4]. Fifteen participants had one or more situational assessments or internship in a competitive employment setting, and of these, eight obtained employment. A total of 21 participants obtained one or more competitive jobs (one individual had three jobs, and one had two jobs). The Employment Coordinators have explored the possibility of the Job Corp for seven participants. Field trips have been made and interviews have been conducted.

[1]One participant in Planning is also in Development and is included in that number.
[2]One participant is employed who was also successfully closed according to the BRS criteria and is counted in that category.

Table 4
Summary of Participants [Active 5 Months or More] with Work Experience

Number of Active Participants with 5 or More Months	Hartford (N=26)		Enterprise Community of Bridgeport (N=11)		Total (N=37)	
Situational Assessment[a] Only	4	15.4%	3	27.3%	7	18.9%
Employment Only	9	34.6%	4	36.4%	13	35.1%
Situational Assessment and Employment	5	19.2%	3	27.3%	8	21.6%
Total Situation Assessments	9	34.6%	6	54.5%	15	40.5%
Total Competitive Employment	14	53.8%	7	63.6%	21	56.8%
Total Work Experience Situation Assessment and/or Competitive Employment	18	69.2%	10	90.9%	28	75.7%

[a]Situation Assessment or Internship in community-based setting for 40 to 80 hours; training stipend of $3.50 paid to participants. Employment=Competitive Employment with minimum wage.

2.5 Seventy percent (70%) or more will achieve a positive BRS closure by maintaining employment for a minimum of 60 days.

To date three participants have achieved the BRS closure criterion of 60 days of continuous employment. Two others have met this criterion but have not yet been closed by BRS because additional services are being planned or developed. One young woman has been working for more than five months but has not been closed because the job is part time and is considered an exploratory work experience. The other is working at UPS earning eight dollars an hour with benefits, and is taking driving lessons in order to qualify for higher paying positions.

2.6 Participants will maintain placements in competitive employment with follow-along support and peer support fading out over time. The Employment Coordinator will be available on an as needed basis for the entire project.

Twenty-one participants who were placed in competitive employment received follow-along support. Currently 11 are still employed and are receiving support.

2.7 Those who do not maintain positions will receive assistance with replacement and other project services until successful employment outcomes are achieved.

Of the 10 participants who are no longer employed, five are still receiving services either through development of new positions or support. The other five cases were closed because the participants were no longer interested in participating in the project for various reasons: one is going to college full time, one moved to Canada, another left the state and two did not want project services at this time.

Objective 3. All project participants will be provided with peer support from a peer mentor who is successfully employed, either a professional consumer ("Prosumer" with SMI or SED) or a co-worker mentor from the work site.

3.1 Match "Prosumers," successfully employed professional consumers with SMI or SED, with participants as peer mentors and role models through collaboration with the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Prosumer Mentors will spend a minimum of one hour each week meeting or talking with participants.

Currently participants have been very involved with their Employment Coordinator and Job Coach who have been attempting to establish trusting relationships with them. It has been felt that it would be too soon to introduce someone else. Plans are being made for implementation in Year 2 for discussion/support groups or job clubs where participants can come together. Peer mentoring may come out of that. In addition participants will be asked if they would like a Prosumer mentor. If yes, efforts will be made to find a mentor.

3.2 Match co-workers with participants at their work site as peer mentors and role models through collaboration with employers. Co-worker Peer Mentors will spend a minimum of one hour each week with their peer participant at lunch time, during or after-work.

Most participants are receiving informal peer support at the job site. They are receiving formal support from their job supervisor and CEO project staff. For example, one participant has had a very supportive relationship with his manager. She helped him work through anxiety over learning new tasks and fear about an orientation training. Another participant was befriended by a co-worker who talks to her and helps her to stay on task.

A two-day workshop for participants was held in Bridgeport at the end of September. The purpose of the workshop was to provide training on networking. Similar workshops are scheduled for New Britain and Hartford in October. One outcome of these workshops is to encourage peer support. Project staff are forming peer support groups in New Britain and Bridgeport.

Objective 4. Strengthen school and community capacity (including families, LEA's, service/training providers, and employers) to successfully employ youth and young adults with SMI and SED by increasing awareness and knowledge of the needs of this population and the use of natural supports.

4.1 Provide information and/or training to increase awareness and knowledge of families.

The Employment Coordinators and Job Coaches are providing information to participants' families on a one-to-one basis, when appropriate, to enable them to provide support to the participant in obtaining and maintaining employment.

The Mental Health Association of Connecticut (MHAC) has conducted seven workshops for parents throughout the state and more than 40 attended. These workshops consisted of a representative of Rehabilitative Services who presented information on transition to employment and a representative from a mental health provider who presented information about developmental issues and problems impacting youth with SMI and SED and their parents.

Participant evaluations were collected from 29 participants and are summarized in Table 5. More than 90% of the participants were parents, the remainder being mental health professionals. Participants cited the explanation of mental illness, information about services and BRS, and the opportunity to hear that other people have similar problems as very helpful. Two additional workshops are planned for Spanish-speaking parents are planned: one for the winter and one for the spring.

In addition, the CEO Project is collaborating with the Statewide Transition Project to conduct eight parent workshops throughout the state. A parent trainer who is knowledgeable about students with SED will be conducting the training. Some parent workshops are planned for the Bridgeport area that will target minority groups.

Table 5
Percent of Workshop Participants Rating Items as Excellent or Very Good

		Percent Rating Excellent or Very Good
Q1.	In general, how would you rate this workshop?	89.7%
Q2.	Was the content clear and well organized?	86.2%
Q3.	Was the content helpful to you?	82.8%
Q4.	How would you rate the presenters?	93.1%
Q5.	How would you rate the handouts?	93.1%

4.2 Provide information and/or training to increase awareness and knowledge of schools, state agencies, local job training providers, employers and co-workers to enable them to provide natural supports to this population in their pursuit and maintenance of employment.

The two-day training held in May [see 1.2] was attended by 37 professionals including representatives of BRS, mental health agencies, schools, and other agencies. This workshop provided an opportunity for these constituencies to gain greater understanding of many aspects of the rehabilitation process for persons with mental illness. Information about the types of supports consumers need to be successful in employment settings and the larger community were also discussed.

A breakfast workshop to increase employer awareness is being planned for Year 2 in collaboration with Goodwill Industries of Western Connecticut and the Bridgeport Regional Business Council.

Objective 5. Evaluate the success of the model and compare the outcomes of an early intervention/prevention approach targeting in-school youth ages 17 - 21 vs. an out-of-school approach for young adults ages 17 - 26.

A control group design study is being used to compare project participants with a sample of BRS clients who meet the project criteria but who are from non project communities with similar demographics (i.e., Waterbury, New Haven, Ansonia, Bethel, Danbury, Hamden, Meriden, Middletown, Norwalk, Stamford, West Haven). The two groups (project and control) include individuals with SED or SMI, between the ages of 17 and 21 who are in school or between the ages of 17 and 26 who are out of school.

Employment status and other information have been gathered on both the experimental (CEO participants) and control group members as of September 30, 1996. Comparisons between the two groups will be made at intervals throughout the term of the project.

III. Information Dissemination

The Project Coordinator and the Project Evaluator plan to report on the project and the evaluation design as part of a symposium on Special Education and Rehabilitation Research at the annual meeting of the Northeastern Educational Research Association on October 23, 1996 in Ellenville, NY.

A collaborative proposal has been submitted by Matrix Research Institute to the International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services for presentation at their annual conference in June in Vancouver, BC. The proposal is for a symposium of four model transition programs for students with SED. Each of the four programs (Matrix, Philadelphia, PA; CAMWERCS, Camden, NJ; Community Based Program for Social Development, St. Paul, MN; and CEO) will present information on their model.

Appendix A
Case Studies

The following are two case studies of participants in the COE Project. They have been given pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Albert is from Hartford and graduated from high school before coming to the project. Arthur is from Bridgeport and joined the project while still in school. Both young men are minorities. Both joined the project in January 1996. These stories were written by the Employment Coordinators.

"Albert"

The story I will be sharing with you is a snapshot of the last eight months of this young man's life as experienced through my relationship with him as his employment counselor in this project. I met Albert in January of this year. We had difficulty scheduling and accomplishing our first meeting but once we did, Albert followed through with most of his meetings with me. I really liked Albert immediately and he seemed to feel safe with me. He followed through with our scheduled appointments something he failed to do with other adult providers. He also seemed to have a very positive relationship with his teachers from Polaris, the high school he graduated from in 1995. According to the staff there Albert had done very well there and had shown considerable growth and developed some skills in the culinary field. Albert had been referred to and accepted for services with the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services. Albert was referred to me by both BRS and Polaris. Albert's BRS counselor relayed that Albert had not been following through with appointments. They had developed a work plan where Albert defined his employment goal as "baker."

Consistent with his goal I was able to develop a work experience which would begin with a 40-hour situational assessment as provided by the grant. This would take place at Bruegger's Bagel's in West Hartford. Concurrently Albert had no permanent home, he "floated" between his sister's home in East Hartford and friends in Hartford. Albert interviewed well and began his situational assessment in March 1996. Training for the job of baker required that Albert complete 30 questions related to information found in the Baker's Procedure Book. We worked on this together at the job site. Albert took a long time and initially had trouble understanding how the information was organized in the book but stuck with it and successfully accomplished the assignment. Concurrently Albert has moved to an apartment with a roommate and is fearful of this new independence but has nevertheless met it head-on. He now has a phone and is more settled.

This work experience became a competitive employment opportunity as Albert was hired part-time on May 1 and full-time in July. Albert was able to learn the job and perform it satisfactorily. Albert however had some difficulty with attendance, and reliability became an issue. His employer was committed to making this work and on several occasions met with Albert and me to celebrate Albert's strengths and to process and address areas which needed improvement. It was very difficult for Albert to deal with this at times. Our relationship was very strong and comfortable and Albert shared with me his discontent with the job. Much of his problem centered

around his difficulty understanding the realities of work; he thought it was all the supervisor's fault because he was just "too strict." I explained to Albert that the supervisor was only doing his job and that some of these rules would be in most jobs Albert would have. During this time Albert also expressed an interest in trying other things (working a funeral home, catering, computers). I told him I could arrange meetings with people in these fields for him to explore the options. I also encouraged him to continue this job at Brueggers until he found another. At times he really sounded frustrated and said that he could not wait to find another job and I supported him quitting if he did so appropriately by giving two weeks notice. As Albert stayed in the job, he got more used to it. Coworkers and staff seemed to really like him. On August 24 Albert became upset when his boss explained the importance of coming to work even when "you are not feeling well." Albert had beeped me before and I too had suggested that he did not sound sick enough to miss work considering he had missed other days and this was an area of concern. He lost the job after telling his boss what he could with the job.

During the time I have known Albert it has become clear that he has many things going on which he has trouble managing. I have talked extensively with Albert about seeking counseling. He has said he will get someone but has not followed through. Albert met with his BRS counselor and Elizabeth [Project Job Coach] and I to discuss where we go from here. We agreed that his BRS case would be closed given his successful four months at Brueggers and that at this time he needed to focus on getting counseling and exploring other career options. I would continue to work with him but would not actively develop a job at this time.

Despite a dip in progress at this writing, Albert has made considerable progress. When comparing the length and quality of time employed and engagement with me to his record, significant improvement can be seen. Though Albert did not handle the situation in the best fashion he did not run away or become aggressive which appears to be what he used to do in the past. Psychological reports reviewed from 1985, 1988, and 1991 indicate improvement in impulse control through the years. His relationships with others continue to improve though Albert continues to have scattered thoughts and difficulty putting things in perspective. His relationship with me continues to develop and hopefully will lead to greater acceptance of his disability and the need for a more therapeutic intervention."

"Arthur"

Arthur is a 19-year-old Hispanic male who resides in the East end of Bridgeport, CT. In the past five years this neighborhood has struggled with the challenges of increased crime. It has been referred to as, "little Beirut," from the Bridgeport police department, in part because of the number of murders in the area. Arthur graduated in June 1996 from an out-of-district school placement for students with individualized educational needs. Records reflect depression, which required hospitalization, with aggression toward family members.

We met Arthur in January 1996 to discuss his goals, dreams and desires for the future. A soft-spoken man, he reported an interest in working with animals, computers, and nursing homes. Since interests were numerous, Arthur agreed to further explore his areas during the school day. An internship at a local veterinarian was immediately arranged. The vet offered Arthur full exposure and experience in his office. After leaving the office, Arthur said, "I don't think I can watch them cut up the animals." It was then decided he would look into the field of computers.

An internship at Corporate GE was available and Arthur was initially excited. His hesitation was evident, and upon further sharing, he explained that he now needs a full time job, and may even quit school to earn money since his girlfriend is expecting a baby in September. This was now March, and conversations with his mother also revealed an urgency to earn money and take care of his responsibilities. Arthur's mother did not want him to report to an internship without earning pay. Mom voiced her concerns that he would look bad to his girlfriend's family if he did not get a job now. After meeting with the leaders of the video communication center at GE, Arthur really wanted to try 40-hours at GE. He was quite clear that even if a job did not arise, the value of a letter of recommendation would help in his job search. The only other issue he faced was having the proper clothes for the corporate arena. BRS quickly assisted in obtaining the clothing, and the internship began.

Arthur's schedule was Tuesday/Thursday from 9-1 p.m. Past absences from school threatened his graduation, however, clear communication with the director told Arthur that he must attend school in order to attend the internship. This collaboration proved vital to his attendance at school. Arthur enjoyed GE so much that he never missed any more school up to graduation. I picked up Arthur from home and at GE each day. This also proved invaluable as it served as a time to really stay in touch with the evolving changes the internship was generating. The pride on his face as he exited GE spoke louder than words in a report could generate. Arthur's mentor at GE brilliantly introduced him to numerous management staff during lunch. Arthur was told that he was the first high school intern that GE generally worked with college level students.

Each day over the course of the next two months revealed more and more excitement and personal self-esteem growth for Arthur. He shared his experiences of meeting the chef for GE, the GE Union attorney, and the technician who controls the teleconferencing center. These relationships grew as they all offered Arthur mugs and t-shirts if he would play on their basketball

team. They wanted the young guy they said. Arthur's mentor also shared his new daddy news with Arthur. The realization of Arthur's changing self-perception was clear on the day he said, "Barb, these men talk to me like a regular person, one of the secretaries is even from Black Rock." (A section of Bridgeport.)

Arthur's letter of recommendation arrived at his home from two different supervisors. It glowed with admiration and work performance. One month later Arthur was hired for $8.00/hour at United Parcel Services. More than thirty applicants applied and Arthur was hired according to his reports, "I think it's because of my corporate experience."

The baby is due in a couple of weeks as Arthur earns top dollar with more hours available to be with his child. He is working on his driver's license so he can look for a promotion within his company, and was recently awarded union status with benefits after thirty successful days on the job. A bike, parenting courses and continued dialogue through the as-needed beeper service, are in place for the changes which will occur over the next year.